MINUTES

OF SEVERAL

CONVERSATIONS

BETWEEN

The REVEREND Mr.

JOHN and CHARLES WESLEY,

AND OTHERS.

From the Year 1744, *to the Year* 1780.

LONDON:

Printed by J. PARAMORE, at the Foundry, Moorfields.

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MINUTES, &c.

From the Year 1744, to the Year 1780.

IT is deſired, That all things be conſidered as in the immediate preſence of God:

That every perſon ſpeak freely whatever is in his heart.

Q. 1. How may we beſt improve the time of this Conference?

A. 1. While we are converſing, let us have an eſpecial care, to ſet God always before us.

2. In the intermediate hours, let us redeem all the time we can for private exerciſes:

3. Therein let us give ourſelves to prayer for one another, and for a bleſſing on this our labour.

Q. 2. Have our Conferences been as uſeful as they might have been?

A. No: we have been continually ſtraitened for time. Hence, ſcarce any thing has been ſearched to the bottom. To remedy this, let every Conference laſt nine days, concluding on Wedneſday in the ſecond week.

Q. 3. What may we reaſonably believe to be God's deſign, in raiſing up the Preachers called *Methodiſts?*

A. To reform the Nation, particularly the Church; and to ſpread ſcriptural holineſs over the land.

Q. 4. What was the riſe of *Methodiſm*, ſo called?

A. In 1729, two young Men, reading the Bible,

ſaw they could not be ſaved without holineſs, followed after it, and incited others ſo to do. In 1737 they ſaw holineſs comes by faith. They ſaw likewiſe, that men are juſtified, before they are ſanctified: but ſtill holineſs was their point.

God then thruſt them out, utterly againſt their will, to raiſe an holy people. When Satan could no otherwiſe hinder this, he threw *Calviniſm* in the way; and then *Antinomianiſm*, which ſtrikes directly at the root of all holineſs.

Q. 5. Is it adviſable for us to preach in as many places as we can, without forming any Societies?

A. By no means; we have made the trial in various places: and that for a conſiderable time. But all the ſeed has fallen as by the way-ſide. There is ſcarce any fruit remaining.

Q. 6. Where ſhould we endeavour to preach moſt?

A. 1. Where there is the greateſt number of quiet and willing hearers: 2. Where there is moſt fruit.

Q. 7. Is field-preaching unlawful?

A. We conceive not. We do not know that it is contrary to any law either of God or man.

Q. 8. Have we not uſed it too ſparingly?

A. It ſeems we have: 1. Becauſe our Call is, to ſave that which is loſt. Now we cannot expect them to ſeek *us*. Therefore we ſhould go and ſeek *them*. 2. Becauſe we are particularly called, by *going into the highways and hedges*, (which none elſe will do,) *to compel them to come in*. 3. Becauſe that reaſon againſt it is not good, "The houſe will hold all that come." The houſe may hold all that *come* to the houſe; but not all that would *come* to the field.

The greateſt hindrance to this you are to expect from rich, or cowardly, or lazy *Methodiſts*. But regard them not, neither Stewards, Leaders, nor People. Whenever the weather will permit, go out in God's name into the moſt public places, and call all to repent and believe the goſpel: every Sunday,

Sunday, in particular: eſpecially where there are old Societies, leſt they ſettle upon their lees.

The Stewards will frequently oppoſe this, leſt they loſe their uſual collection. But this is not a ſufficient reaſon againſt it. Shall we barter ſouls for money?

Q. 9. Ought we not diligently to obſerve, in what places God is pleaſed at any time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly?

A. We ought, and at that time to ſend more Labourers than uſual into that part of the harveſt.

But whence ſhall we have them? 1. So far as we can afford it, we will keep a reſerve of Preachers at Kingſwood: 2. Let an exact Liſt be kept of thoſe who are propoſed for trial, but not accepted.

Q. 10. How often ſhall we permit ſtrangers to be preſent at the meeting of the Society?

A. At every other meeting of the Society in every place, let no ſtranger be admitted. At other times they may; but the ſame perſon not above twice or thrice. In order to this, ſee that all in every place ſhew their Tickets before they come in. If the Stewards and Leaders are not exact herein, employ others that have more reſolution.

Q. 11. How may the Leaders of Claſſes be made more uſeful?

A. 1. Let each of them be diligently examined concerning his method of meeting a Claſs?

Let this be done with all poſſible exactneſs at the next Quarterly Viſitation. And in order to this, allow ſufficient time for the viſiting of each Society.

2. Let each Leader carefully inquire how every ſoul in his Claſs proſpers? Not only how each perſon obſerves the outward Rules, but how he grows in the Knowledge and Love of God?

3. Let the Leaders converſe with the Aſſiſtant frequently and freely.

Q. 12. Can any thing farther be done, in order to make the meetings of the Claſſes lively and profitable?

A. 1. Change improper Leaders:

2. Let the Leaders frequently meet each other's Claſſes.

3. Let us obſerve, which Leaders are the moſt uſeful. And let theſe meet the other Claſſes as often as poſſible.

4. See that all the Leaders be not only men of ſound judgment, but men truly devoted to God.

Q. 13. How can we farther aſſiſt thoſe under our care?

A. 1. By meeting the married men and women together, the firſt Sunday after the Viſitation; the ſingle men and women apart, on the two following; in all the large Societies:

2. By inſtructing them at their own houſes. What unſpeakable need is there of this? The World ſay, "The Methodiſts are no better than other people." This is not true. But it is nearer the truth, than we are willing to believe.

For 1. Perſonal Religion either toward God or man, is amazingly ſuperficial among us.

I can but juſt touch on a few generals. How little Faith is there among us? How little Communion with God? How little living in Heaven, walking in Eternity, Deadneſs to every Creature? How much Love of the World? Deſire of Pleaſure, of Eaſe, of Praiſe, of getting Money?

How little brotherly Love? What continual judging one another? What Goſſipping, Evil-ſpeaking, Tale-bearing? What want of moral Honeſty? To inſtance only in one or two particulars:

Who does as he would be done by, in buying and ſelling? Particularly in ſelling Horſes? Write him knave that does not. And the Methodiſt knave is the worſt of all knaves.

2. Family Religion is ſhamefully wanting, and almoſt in every branch.

And the Methodiſts in general will be little the better, till we take quite another courſe with them. For what avails *Public Preaching alone*, though we could preach like Angels?

We muſt, yea every travelling Preacher, muſt inſtruct

inſtruct them *from houſe to houſe*. Till this is done, and that in good earneſt, the Methodiſts will be little better than other people.

Our Religion is not deep, univerſal, uniform; but ſuperficial, partial, uneven. It will be ſo, till we ſpend half as much time in *this viſiting*, as we now do in talking uſeleſsly.

Can we find a better method of doing this than Mr. *Baxter's!* If not let us adopt it without delay. His whole tract, intitled *Gildas Salvianus*, is well worth a careful peruſal. A ſhort Extract from it I will ſubjoin. Speaking of this viſiting from houſe to houſe, he ſays, (p. 351.)

"We ſhall find many hindrances, both in ourſelves, and in the people.

1. In ourſelves there is much dulneſs and lazineſs: ſo that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in the work:

2. We have a baſe, man-pleaſing temper, ſo that we let men periſh, rather than loſe their love; we let them go quietly to Hell, leſt we ſhould anger them:

3. Some of us have alſo a fooliſh Baſhfulneſs. We know not how to begin, and bluſh to contradict the Devil.

4. But the greateſt hindrance is, weakneſs of faith. Our whole motion is weak, becauſe the ſpring of it is weak.

5. Laſtly, we are unſkilful in the work. How few know, how to deal with men, ſo as to get within them, and ſuit all our diſcourſe to their ſeveral conditions and tempers: to chuſe the fitteſt ſubjects, and follow them with an holy mixture of Seriouſneſs, and Terror, and Love, and Meekneſs?

And we have many difficulties to grapple with in our people.

1. Too many of them will be unwilling to be taught, till we conquer their perverſeneſs, by the force of reaſon, and the power of love.

2. And many are ſo dull, that they will ſhun being taught for fear of ſhewing their dulneſs.

And

And indeed you will find it extremely hard, to make them underſtand the very plaineſt points.

3. And it is ſtill harder, to fix things on their hearts, without which all our labour is loſt. If you have not therefore great ſerioufneſs and fervency, what good can you expect? And after all, it is grace alone that muſt do the work.

4. And when we have made ſome impreſſions on their hearts, if we look not after them, they will ſoon die away.

But as great as this labour of private inſtruction is, it is abſolutely neceſſary. For after all our Preaching, many of our people are almoſt as ignorant, as if they had never heard the Goſpel. I ſpeak as plain as I can: yet I frequently meet with thoſe who have been my hearers many years, who know not whether Chriſt be God or Man? And how few are there, that know the nature of Repentance, Faith, and Holineſs? Moſt of them have a ſort of confidence, that God will ſave them, while the world has their hearts. I have found by experience, that one of theſe has learned more from one hour's cloſe diſcourſe, than from ten years' public preaching.

And undoubtedly this private application is implied in thoſe ſolemn words of the Apoſtle. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall judge the quick and dead at his appearing, preach the word, be inſtant in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon: reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-ſuffering.*

O Brethren, if we could but ſet this work on foot in all our Societies, and proſecute it zealouſly, what Glory would redound to God? If the common ignorance were baniſhed, and every ſhop and every houſe buſied in ſpeaking of the word and works of God: ſurely God would dwell in our habitations, and make us his delight.

And this is abſolutely neceſſary to the welfare of our people, many of whom neither believe nor repent to this day. Look round and ſee how many of them are ſtill in apparent danger of damnation.

And

And how can you walk and talk and be merry with ſuch people, when you know their caſe? Methinks when you look them in the face, you ſhould break forth into tears, as the Prophet did when he looked upon *Hazael;* and then ſet on them with the moſt vehement and importunate exhortations. O, for God's ſake, and for the ſake of poor ſouls, beſtir yourſelves, and ſpare no pains that may conduce to their ſalvation.

What cauſe have we to bleed before the Lord this day, that we have ſo long neglected this good work! If we had but ſet upon it ſooner, how many more might have been brought to Chriſt? And how much holier and happier might we have made our Societies before now? And why might we not have done it ſooner? There were many hindrances: and ſo there always will be. But the greateſt hindrance was in ourſelves, in our littleneſs of faith and love.

But it is objected, I. This will take up ſo much time, that we ſhall not have time to follow our ſtudies.

I anſwer, 1. Gaining knowledge is a good thing; but ſaving ſouls is a better. 2. By this very thing you will gain the moſt excellent knowledge, that of God, and Eternity. 3. You will have time for gaining other knowledge too, if you ſpend all your Mornings therein. Only ſleep not more than you need; and never be idle or triflingly employed. But 4. If you can do but one, let your ſtudies alone. I would throw by all the Libraries in the world, rather than be guilty of the loſs of one ſoul.

I allow, in ſome of the country Circuits, where you have only a day to ſpend in each place, you have not time for this excellent work. But you have, wherever you ſpend ſeveral days together in one Town.

It is objected, II. "The people will not ſubmit to it." If ſome will not, others will. And the ſucceſs with them, will repay all your labour. O let us herein follow the example of St. *Paul.*

1. For

1. For our general buſineſs, *Serving the Lord, with all humility of mind:* 2. Our ſpecial work, *Take heed to yourſelves and to all the flock:* 3. Our Doctrine, *Repentance toward God, and Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*: 4. The place, *I have taught you publickly, and from houſe to houſe:* 5. The object and manner of teaching, *I ceaſed not to warn every one, night and day, with tears:* 6. His innocence and ſelf-denial herein, *I have coveted no man's ſilver or gold:* 7. His patience, *Neither count I my life dear unto myſelf.* And among all our motives, let theſe be ever before our eyes. 1. *The Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood:* 2. *Grievous wolves ſhall enter in: yea, of yourſelves ſhall men ariſe, ſpeaking perverſe things.* Write this upon your hearts, and it will do you more good than twenty years' ſtudy.

Let every Preacher, having a catalogue of thoſe in each Society, go to each houſe. Deal gently with them, that the report of it may move others to deſire your coming. Give the children "the Inſtructions for Children," and encourage them to get them by heart. Indeed you will find it no eaſy matter to teach the ignorant the principles of religion. So true is the remark of Archbiſhop *Uſher*, "Great Scholars may think this work beneath them. But they ſhould conſider, the laying the foundation ſkilfully, as it is of the greateſt importance, ſo it is the maſter-piece of the wiſeſt builder. And let the wiſeſt of us all try, whenever we pleaſe, we ſhall find, that to lay this ground-work rightly, to make the ignorant underſtand the grounds of Religion, will put us to the trial of all our ſkill."

Perhaps in doing this it may be well, 1. After a few loving words ſpoken to all in the houſe, to take each perſon ſingly into another room, where you may deal cloſely with him, about his ſin, and miſery, and duty. Set theſe home, or you loſe all your labour. (At leaſt, let none be preſent but thoſe who are familiar with each other.)

2. Hear what the children have learnt by heart.

3. Chuſe

3. Chuſe ſome of the weightieſt points, and try if they underſtand them. As, "Do you believe you have ſin in you? What does ſin deſerve? What remedy has God provided for guilty, helpleſs ſinners?"

4. Often with the Queſtion ſuggeſt the Anſwer. As, What is Repentance? Sorrow for ſin, or a conviction, that we are guilty, helpleſs ſinners? What is Faith? A divine conviction of things not ſeen?"

5. Where you perceive they do not underſtand the ſtreſs of your Queſtion, lead them into it by other Queſtions. For inſtance, you aſk, "How do you think your ſins will be pardoned?" They anſwer, "By repenting and mending my life." You aſk farther, "But will your amendment make ſatisfaction for your paſt ſins?" They will anſwer, "I hope ſo, or I know not what will." One would think, theſe had no knowledge of Chriſt at all. And ſome have not. But others have, and give ſuch anſwers only, becauſe they do not underſtand the ſcope of the queſtion. Aſk them farther, "Can you be ſaved without the death of Chriſt? They immediately ſay, "No." And if you aſk, "What has he ſuffered for you?" They will ſay, "He ſhed his blood for us." But many cannot expreſs even what they have ſome conception of: no, not even when expreſſions are put into their mouths. With theſe you are to deal exceeding tenderly, leſt they be diſcouraged.

6. If you perceive them troubled, that they cannot anſwer, ſtep in yourſelf, and take the burden off them; anſwering the queſtion yourſelf. And do it thoroughly and plainly, making a full explication of the whole buſineſs to them.

7. When you have tried their knowledge, proceed to inſtruct them, according to their ſeveral capacities. If a man underſtands the fundamentals, ſpeak what you perceive he moſt needs, either explaining farther ſome doctrines, or ſome duty, or ſhewing him the neceſſity of ſomething which he neglects.

neglects. If he ſtill underſtands not, go over it again till he does.

8. Next enquire into his ſtate, whether convinced or unconvinced, converted or unconverted? Tell him, if need be, what converſion is: and then renew and inforce the enquiry.

9. If unconverted, labour with all your power to bring his heart to a ſenſe of his condition. Set this home with a more earneſt voice than you ſpoke before. Get to the heart, or you do nothing.

10. Conclude all with a ſtrong exhortation, which ſhould inforce, 1. The duty of the heart, in order to receive Chriſt. 2. The avoiding former ſins, and conſtantly uſing the outward means. And be ſure, if you can, to get their promiſe, to forſake ſin, change their company, and uſe the Means. And do this ſolemnly, reminding them of the preſence of God, who hears their promiſes, and expects the performance.

11. Before you leave them, engage the head of each family to call all his family together every Sunday before they go to bed, and hear what they can repeat, and ſo continue, till they have learnt the *Inſtructions* perfectly. And afterwards let him take care, that they do not forget what they have learnt.

Do this in earneſt, and you will ſoon find what a work you take in hand, in undertaking to be a travelling Preacher!

Q. 14. How ſhall we prevent improper perſons from inſinuating into the Society?

A. 1. Give Tickets to none till they are recommended by a Leader, with whom they have met at leaſt two months on trial.

2. Give Notes to none but thoſe who are recommended by one you know, or till they have met three or four times in a Claſs.

3. Give them the Rules the firſt time they meet.

Q. 15. When ſhall we admit new members?

A. In large Towns, admit them into the Bands at the quarterly Love-feaſt following the Viſitation: into

into the Society, on the Sunday following the Viſitation. Then alſo read the names of them that are excluded.

Q. 16. Should we inſiſt on the Band-Rules? Particularly with regard to Dreſs?

A. By all means. This is no time to give any Encouragement to Superfluity of Apparel. Therefore give no Band-Tickets to any, till they have left off ſuperfluous Ornaments. In order to this, 1. Let every Aſſiſtant read the Thoughts upon Dreſs, at leaſt once a year, in every large Society. 2. In viſiting the Claſſes, be very mild, but very ſtrict. 3. Allow no exempt caſe, not even of a married Woman. Better one ſuffer than many. 4. Give no Ticket to any that wear Calaſhes, High-Heads, or enormous Bonnets.

To encourage meeting in Band, 1. In every large Society, have a Love-feaſt quarterly for the Bands only. 2. Never fail to meet them once a week. 3. Exhort every Believer to embrace the advantage. 4. Give a Band-Ticket to none till they have met a quarter on trial.

Obſerve! You give none a Band-Ticket, *before* he meets, but *after* he has met!

Q. 17. Have thoſe in Band left off Snuff and Drams?

A. No. Many are ſtill inſlaved to one or the other. In order to redreſs this, 1. Let no Preacher touch either on any account. 2. Strongly diſſuade our People from them. 3. Anſwer their pretences, particularly curing the Cholic.

Q. 18. Do we obſerve any evil which has lately prevailed among our Societies?

A. Many of our Members have married with Unbelievers, yea, with unawakened perſons. This has had fatal effects. They had either a croſs for life, or turned back to perdition.

Q. 19. What can be done, to put a ſtop to this?

A. 1. Let every Preacher publicly inforce the Apoſtle's caution, *Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers.* 2. Let him openly declare, whoever does

this will be expelled the Society. 3. When any ſuch is expelled, let a ſuitable exhortation be ſubjoined. And, 4. Let all be exhorted, to take no ſtep in ſo weighty a matter without adviſing with the moſt ſerious of their brethren.

Q. 20. Ought any Woman to marry, without the conſent of her Parents?

A. In general, ſhe ought not. Yet there may be an exception. For if, 1. A woman be under a neceſſity of marrying: if 2. Her Parents abſolutely refuſe to let her marry any Chriſtian: then ſhe may, nay, ought to marry without their conſent. Yet even then a Methodiſt-Preacher ought not to marry her.

Q. 21. Do not Sabbath-breaking, Dram-drinking, Evil-ſpeaking, Unprofitable Converſation, Lightneſs, Expenſiveneſs or Gaiety of Apparel, and contracting Debts without due care to diſcharge them, ſtill prevail in ſeveral places? How may theſe Evils be remedied?

A. 1. Let us preach expreſsly on each of theſe heads. 2. Read in every Society the Sermon on Evil-ſpeaking. 3. Let the Leaders cloſely examine and exhort every perſon to put away the accurſed thing. 4. Let the Preacher warn every Society, that none who is guilty herein can remain with us. 5. Extirpate Smuggling, buying or ſelling uncuſtomed Goods, out of every Society. Let none remain with us, who will not totally abſtain from every kind and degree of it. Speak tenderly, but earneſtly and frequently of it, in every Society near the Coaſts. And read to them, and diligently diſperſe among them, "The Word to a Smuggler." 6. Extirpate Bribery, receiving any thing, directly or indirectly, for voting in any Election. Shew no reſpect of perſons herein, but expel all that touch the accurſed thing. Largely ſhew, both in public and private, the wickedneſs of thus ſelling our Country. And every where read "The Word to a Freeholder," and diſperſe it with both hands.

Q. 22. What ſhall we do to prevent Scandal, when any of our Members become bankrupt?

A. Let

A. Let the Aſſiſtant talk with him at large. And if he has not kept fair Accounts, or has been concerned in that baſe practice, of raiſing Money by *coining Notes*, (commonly called the *Bill-trade*) let him be expelled immediately.

Q. 23. What is the Office of a Chriſtian *Miniſter?*

A. To watch over ſouls, as he that muſt give account.

Q. 24. In what view may we and our *Helpers* be conſidered?

A. Perhaps as Extraordinary Meſſengers (i. e. out of the ordinary way) deſigned, 1. To provoke the regular Miniſters to jealouſy. 2. To ſupply their lack of ſervice, toward thoſe who are periſhing for want of knowledge.

Q. 25. What is the Office of an *Helper?*

A. In the abſence of a Miniſter, to feed and guide the flock: in particular,

1. To preach Morning and Evening. (But he is never to begin later in the Evening than Seven o'Clock, unleſs in particular caſes.)

2. To meet the Society and the Bands weekly.

3. To meet the Leaders weekly.

Let every Preacher be particularly exact in this, and in the Morning-Preaching. If he has twenty Hearers, let him preach. If not, let him ſing and pray.

N. B. We are fully determined, Never to drop the Morning-Preaching: and to continue Preaching at five, wherever it is practicable, particularly, in *London* and *Briſtol*.

Q. 26. What are the Rules of an Helper?

A. 1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never *while away* time: neither ſpend any more time at any place than is ſtrictly neceſſary.

2. Be ſerious. Let your motto be, Holineſs to the Lord. Avoid all Lightneſs, Jeſting, and fooliſh Talking.

3. Converſe ſparingly and cautiouſly with Women: particularly with young Women.

4. Take no ſtep toward Marriage, without firſt conſulting with your Brethren.

5. Believe evil of no one: unleſs you ſee it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the beſt Conſtruction on every thing. You know the Judge is always ſuppoſed to be on the Priſoner's ſide.

6. Speak evil of no one: elſe *your* word eſpecially, would eat as doth a Canker: keep your thoughts within your own breaſt, till you come to the perſon concerned.

7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly as ſoon as may be: elſe it will feſter in your heart. Make all haſte to caſt the fire out of your boſom.

8. Do not affect the Gentleman. You have no more to do with this character, than with that of a Dancing-Maſter. A Preacher of the Goſpel is the ſervant of all.

9. Be aſhamed of nothing but ſin: not of fetching wood (if time permit) or drawing water: not of cleaning your own ſhoes, or your neighbour's.

10. Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And in general, do not *mend* our Rules, but *keep* them: not for wrath, but for Conſcience' Sake.

11. You have nothing to do, but to ſave ſouls. Therefore ſpend and be ſpent in this work. And go always, not only to thoſe that want you, but to thoſe that want you moſt.

Obſerve. It is not your buſineſs, to preach ſo many times, and to take care of this or that Society: but to ſave as many ſouls as you can; to bring as many ſinners as you poſſibly can to Repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that Holineſs, without which they cannot ſee the Lord. And remember! A Methodiſt-Preacher is to mind *every* point, great and ſmall, in the Methodiſt-Diſcipline! Therefore you will need all the Senſe you have: and to have all your wits about you!

12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a Son in the Goſpel. As ſuch it is your

your part to employ your time, in the manner which we direct: partly in preaching and viſiting from houſe to houſe: partly in Reading, Meditation, and Prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's Vineyard, it is needful that you ſhould do *that part* of the work which we adviſe, at *thoſe times and places* which we judge moſt for his Glory.

Q. 27. What *Power* is this, which you exerciſe over both the Preachers and the Societies?

A. Count *Zinzendorf* loved to keep all things *cloſe:* I love to do all things *openly*. I will therefore tell you all I know of the matter, taking it from the very beginning.

1. In November 1738, two or three perſons who deſired to flee from the wrath to come, and then a few more came to me in *London*, and deſired me to adviſe, and pray with them. I ſaid, "If you will meet me on Thurſday night, I will help you as well as I can." More and more then deſired to meet with them, till they were increaſed to many Hundreds. The caſe was afterwards the ſame at *Briſtol*, *Kingſwood*, *Newcaſtle*, and many other parts of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*. It may be obſerved, the Deſire was on *their* part, not *mine*. My deſire was, to live and die in Retirement. But I did not ſee, that I could refuſe them my help, and be guiltleſs before God.

Here commenced my *Power*; namely, a Power to appoint *when*, and *where*, and *how* they ſhould meet; and to remove thoſe whoſe lives ſhewed that they had not a deſire to flee from the wrath to come. And this Power remained the ſame, whether the people meeting together were twelve, or twelve hundred, or twelve thouſand.

2. In a few days ſome of them ſaid, "Sir, we will not *ſit under you* for nothing: we will ſubſcribe quarterly." I ſaid, "I will have nothing; for I want nothing. My Fellowſhip ſupplies me with all I want." One replied, "Nay, but you want *an hundred and fifteen pounds* to pay for the Leaſe of the Foundery: and likewiſe a large ſum of

money, to put it into repair." On this consideration I suffered them to subscribe. And when the Society met, I asked, "Who will take the trouble of *receiving* this money, and *paying* it, where it is needful?" One said, "I will do it, and keep the account for you." So here was the first *Steward*. Afterwards I desired one or two more to help me as Stewards, and in process of time, a greater number.

Let it be remarked, it was *I myself*, not the *People*, who chose these Stewards, and appointed to each the distinct work, wherein he was to help me, as long as I desired. And herein I began to exercise another sort of *Power*, namely, that of *appointing* and *removing Stewards*.

3. After a time a young man named *Thomas Maxfield*, came and desired to help me as a Son in the Gospel. Soon after came a second, *Thomas Richards*, and then a third, *Thomas Westall*. These severally desired to serve me as Sons, and to labour *when* and *where* I should direct. Observe. These likewise desired *me*, not I *them*. But I durst not refuse their assistance. And here commenced my *Power*, to appoint each of these, *when*, *where*, and *how* to labour: that is, while he chose to continue with me. For each had a power to go away when he pleased: as I had also, to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same, when the number of Preachers increased. I had just the same Power still, to appoint *when*, and *where*, and *how* each should help me: and to tell any (if I saw cause) "I do not desire your help any longer." On these terms, and no other, we joined at first: on these we continue joined. But they do me no favour in being directed by me. It is true, my *reward is with the Lord*. But at present I have nothing from it but trouble and care; and often a burden, I scarce know how to bear.

4. In 1744, I wrote to several Clergymen, and to all who then served me as Sons in the Gospel; desiring

deſiring them to meet me in *London*, and to give me their advice, concerning the beſt method of carrying on the work of God. And when their number increaſed, ſo that it was not convenient to invite them all, for ſeveral years I wrote to thoſe with whom I deſired to confer, and they only met me at *London*, or elſewhere: till at length I gave a general permiſſion, which I now ſee cauſe to retract.

Obſerve. I myſelf ſent for theſe of my own free choice. And I ſent for them to *adviſe*, not *govern* me. Neither did I at any time diveſt myſelf of any part of the Power above deſcribed, which the Providence of God had caſt upon me, without any deſign or choice of mine.

5. What is that *Power?* It is a Power of *admitting* into and *excluding* from the Societies under my care: of chuſing and removing *Stewards*: of receiving or not receiving *Helpers:* of appointing them *when*, *where*, and *how* to help me, and of deſiring any of them to *confer* with me when I ſee good. And as it was merely in obedience to the Providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at firſt accepted this Power, which I never ſought: ſo it is on the ſame Conſideration, not for profit, honour, or pleaſure, that I uſe it at this day.

6. But, "Several Gentlemen are offended at your having *ſo much Power.*" I did not ſeek any part of it. But when it was come unawares, not daring to bury that talent, I uſed it to the beſt of my judgment. Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now, bear it as my burden; the burden which God lays upon me, and therefore I dare not lay it down.

But if you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I may transfer this burden, who *can* and *will* do juſt what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you.

7. But ſome of our Helpers ſay, "This is *ſhackling free-born Engliſhmen*," and demand a *free Conference*,

Conference, that is, A Meeting of all the Preachers, wherein all things ſhall be determined by moſt votes. I anſwer, it is poſſible after my Death ſomething of this kind may take place. But not while I live. To *me* the Preachers have engaged themſelves to ſubmit, to "Serve me as Sons in the Goſpel." But they are not thus engaged to any man or number of men beſides. To *me* the people in general will ſubmit: but they will not thus ſubmit to any other.

It is nonſenſe then to call my uſing this Power, "Shackling free-born Engliſhmen." None needs to ſubmit to it unleſs he *will;* ſo that there is no ſhackling in the caſe. Every Preacher and every member may leave me when he pleaſes. But while he chuſes to ſtay, it is on the ſame terms that he joined me at firſt.

"But this is *making yourſelf a Pope.*" This carries no face of truth. The Pope affirms, that every Chriſtian muſt do all he bids, and believe all he ſays, under pain of damnation. I never affirmed any thing that bears any, the moſt diſtant reſemblance to this. All I affirm is, "The Preachers who chuſe to labour with me, chuſe to ſerve me as Sons in the Goſpel. And the people who chuſe to be under my care, chuſe to be ſo on the ſame terms they were at firſt."

Therefore all talk of this kind is highly injurious to *me*, who bear the burden merely for *your* ſake. And it is exceeding miſchievous to the people, tending to confound their underſtanding, and to fill their hearts with evil ſurmiſings and unkind tempers toward *me;* to whom they really owe more, for taking all this load upon me, for exerciſing this very *Power*, for ſhackling myſelf in this manner, than for all my preaching put together: becauſe preaching twice or thrice a day is no burden to me at all: but the care of all the Preachers and all the People, is a burden indeed!

Q. 28. What reaſons can be aſſigned why ſo many of our Preachers contract nervous Diſorders?

A. The

A. The chief Reaſon, on Dr. *Cadogan's* principles, is either Indolence or Intemperance. 1. Indolence. Several of them uſe too little *Exerciſe*, far leſs than when they wrought at their trade. And this will naturally pave the way for many, eſpecially Nervous Diſorders. 2. Intemperance, (though not in the vulgar ſenſe.) They take more *Food* than they did when they laboured more. And let any man of reflection judge, how long this will conſiſt with Health. Or they uſe more *Sleep* than when they laboured more. And this alone will deſtroy the firmneſs of the Nerves. If then our Preachers would avoid Nervous Diſorders, let them, 1. Take as little Meat, Drink and Sleep as nature will bear: and, 2. Uſe full as much Exerciſe daily as they did before they were Preachers.

Q. 29. What General Method of employing our time would you adviſe us to?

A. We adviſe you, 1. As often as poſſible to riſe at four. 2. From four to five in the morning, and from five to ſix in the evening, to meditate, pray and read, partly the Scripture with the Notes, partly the cloſely-practical parts of what we have publiſhed. 3. From ſix in the morning till twelve (allowing an hour for breakfaſt) to read in order, with much Prayer, the Chriſtian Library, and the other Books which we have publiſhed in proſe and verſe.

Q. 30. Should our Helpers follow Trades?

A. The queſtion is not, Whether they may occaſionally work with their hands, as St. *Paul* did: but whether it be proper for them to keep Shop or follow Merchandize? After long conſideration, it was agreed by all our Brethren, That no Preacher who will not relinquiſh his trade of buying and ſelling, (though it were only Pills, Drops or Balſams,) ſhall be conſidered as a travelling Preacher any longer.

Q. 31. Why is it that the people under our care are no better?

A. Other

A. Other reaſons may concur; but the chief is, becauſe *we* are not more *knowing* and more *holy*.

Q. 32. But why are we not more knowing?

A. Becauſe we are idle. We forget our very firſt Rule, "Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither ſpend any more time at any place than is ſtrictly neceſſary."

I fear there is altogether a fault in this matter, and that few of us are clear: which of you ſpends as many hours a day in *God's work*, as you did formerly in *Man's work*? We talk, talk,—or read Hiſtory, or what comes next to hand. We muſt, abſolutely muſt, cure this evil, or betray the cauſe of God.

But how? 1. Read the *moſt uſeful* Books, and that regularly and conſtantly. Steadily ſpend all the Morning in this Employ, or at leaſt, five hours in four and twenty.

"But I read *only* the *Bible*." Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and by parity of reaſon, to *hear only* the Bible: but if ſo, you need preach no more. Juſt ſo ſaid *George Bell*. And what is the fruit? Why, now he neither reads the Bible, nor any thing elſe.

This is rank Enthuſiaſm. If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. *Paul*. He wanted others too. *Bring the books*, ſays he, *but eſpecially the parchments*, thoſe wrote on parchment.

But I have *no taſte* for Reading. Contract a taſte for it by uſe, or return to your trade.

"But I have no Books." I will give each of you as faſt as you will read them, books to the value of five pounds. And I deſire the Aſſiſtants would take care, that all the large Societies provide our Works for the uſe of the Preachers.

2. In the Afternoon, follow Mr. *Baxter's* plan. Then you will have no time to ſpare: you will have work enough for all your time. Then likewiſe no Preacher will ſtay with us who is as ſalt that has loſt its ſavour. For to ſuch, this Employ-

ment

ment would be mere drudgery. And in order to it, you will have need of all the knowledge you can procure.

The ſum is, Go into *every houſe* in courſe, and teach *every one* therein, young and old, if they belong to us, to be Chriſtians, inwardly and outwardly.

Make every particular plain to their underſtanding; fix it in their memory; write it in their heart. In order to this, there muſt be *line upon line, precept upon precept*. What Patience, what Love, what Knowledge is requiſite for this?

Q. 33. In what particular method ſhould we inſtruct them?

A. You may read, explain, inforce,

1. The Rules of the Society:
2. Inſtructions for Children:
3. The fourth Volume of Sermons, and
4. *Philip Henry's* Method of Family Prayer.

We muſt needs do this, were it only to avoid Idleneſs. Do we not loiter away many Hours in every Week? Each try himſelf: no Idleneſs can conſiſt with Growth in Grace. Nay without Exactneſs in *redeeming time*, you cannot retain the Grace you received in Juſtification.

But what ſhall we do for the *riſing Generation?* Unleſs we take care of this, the preſent Revival will be *res unius ætatis:* it will laſt only the age of a man. Who will labour herein? Let him that is zealous for God and the ſouls of men begin *now*.

1. Where there are ten Children in a Society, meet them at leaſt an hour every week:
2. Talk with them every time you ſee any at home.
3. Pray in earneſt for them:
4. Diligently inſtruct and vehemently exhort all Parents at their own Houſes:
5. Preach expreſsly on Education, particularly at Midſummer, when you ſpeak of *Kingſwood*.

"But I have no Gift for this." Gift or no Gift, you

you are to do it; elſe you are not called to be a *Methodiſt* Preacher: Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earneſtly for the Gift and uſe the means for it. Particularly ſtudy the Inſtructions and Leſſons for Children.

Q. 34. Why are not *we* more Holy? Why do not we live in Eternity? Walk with God all the day long? Why are we not all *devoted to God?* Breathing the whole Spirit of *Miſſionaries?*

A. Chiefly becauſe we are Enthuſiaſts; looking for the End, without uſing the Means:

To touch only upon two or three Inſtances.

Who of you riſes at four? Or even at five, when he does not preach?

Do you recommend to all our Societies, the five o'clock Hour for Private Prayer? Do you obſerve it? Or any other fixt time? Do not you find by experience, that *any time* is *no time?*

Do you know the Obligation and the Benefit of Faſting? How often do you practice it?

The neglect of this alone is ſufficient to account for our Feebleneſs and Faintneſs of Spirit. We are continually grieving the Holy Spirit of God, by the habitual neglect of a plain Duty! Let us amend from this hour.

Q. 35. But how can I faſt, ſince it hurts my Health?

A. There are ſeveral Degrees of Faſting, which cannot hurt your Health. I will inſtance in one. Let you and I every Friday (beginning on the next) avow this Duty throughout the nation, by touching no tea, coffee or chocolate *in the Morning*, but (if we want it) half a pint of Milk, or Water-gruel. Let us dine on Potatoes, and (if we need it) eat three or four ounces of fleſh in the Evening. At other times let us eat no Fleſh-Suppers. Theſe exceedingly tend to breed nervous Diſorders.

Q. 36. What is the beſt General Method of Preaching?

A. 1. To invite: 2. To convince: 3. To offer Chriſt:

Chriſt: 4. To build up; and to do this in ſome meaſure in every Sermon.

Q. 37. Are there any ſmaller Advices relative to Preaching, which might be of uſe to us?

A. Perhaps theſe, 1. Be ſure never to diſappoint a Congregation, unleſs in caſe of Life or Death.

2. Begin and end preciſely at the time appointed:

3. Let your whole Deportment before the Congregation be ſerious, weighty, and ſolemn:

4. Always ſuit your ſubject to your Audience:

5. Chuſe the plaineſt texts you can:

6. Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand:

7. Be ſparing in Allegorizing, or Spiritualizing:

8. Take care of any thing awkward or affected, either in your Geſture, Phraſe or Pronunciation:

9. Sing no Hymns of your own Compoſing:

10. Print nothing without my approbation:

11. Do not uſually pray above eight or ten minutes (at moſt) without intermiſſion:

12. Frequently read and inlarge upon a portion of the Notes: And let young Preachers often *exhort*, without taking a text.

13. In repeating the Lord's Prayer, remember to ſay Hallowed, not hollowed; Treſpaſs againſt *us*; *Amen*:

14. Repeat this Prayer aloud after the Miniſter, as often as he repeats it:

15. Repeat after him aloud every Confeſſion, and both the Doxologies in the Communion-Service:

16. Always kneel during public Prayer:

17. Every where avail yourſelf of the Great Feſtivals, by preaching on the occaſion, and ſinging the Hymns, which you ſhould take care to have in readineſs:

18. Avoid quaint words, however in faſhion, as *object*, *originate*, *very*, *high*, &c.

19. Avoid the faſhionable impropriety of leaving out the u in many words, as Honor, vigor, &c. This is mere childiſh Affectation.

20. Beware of Clowniſhneſs. Be courteous to all.

21. Be merciful to your beaſt. Not only ride moderately, but ſee with your own eyes, that your horſe be rubbed, fed and bedded.

Q. 38. Have not ſome of us been led off from Practical Preaching by (what was called) *preaching Chriſt?*

A. Indeed we have. The moſt effectual way of preaching Chriſt, is to preach him in all his Offices, and to declare his *Law* as well as his *Goſpel*, both to Believers and Unbelievers. Let us ſtrongly and cloſely inſiſt upon inward and outward Holineſs in all its branches.

Q. 39. How ſhall we guard againſt *Formality* in public Worſhip? Particularly in *Singing?*

A. 1. By preaching frequently on the head: 2. By taking care to ſpeak only what we feel: 3. By chuſing ſuch Hymns as are proper for the Congregation: 4. By not ſinging too much at once; ſeldom more than five or ſix verſes: 5. By ſuiting the tune to the words: 6. By often ſtopping ſhort and aſking the people, "Now! Do you know what you ſaid laſt? Did you ſpeak no more than you felt!"

Is not this Formality creeping in already, by thoſe complex tunes, which it is ſcarce poſſible to ſing with Devotion? Such is, "Praiſe the Lord, ye bleſſed ones:" Such the long quavering Hallelujah, annext to the Morning-Song tune, which I defy any man living to ſing devoutly. The repeating the ſame words ſo often, (but eſpecially while another repeats different words, the horrid abuſe which runs through the modern Church-Muſic) as it ſhocks all Common Senſe, ſo it neceſſarily brings in dead Formality, and has no more of Religion in it than a *Lancaſhire* Hornpipe. Beſides, it is a flat contradiction to our Lord's Command, *Uſe not vain repetitions.* For what is vain repetition if this is not? What end of Devotion does it ſerve?

7. Do not ſuffer the people to ſing too ſlow. This naturally tends to Formality, and is brought in by them who have either very ſtrong or very weak voices

voices. 8. In every large Society let them learn to ſing: and let them always learn our own Tunes firſt. 9. Let the Women conſtantly ſing their parts alone. Let no man ſing with them, unleſs he underſtands the Notes, and ſings the Baſe, as it is pricked down in the book. 10. Introduce no new Tunes, till they are perfect in the Old. 11. Let no Organs be placed any where, till propoſed in Conference. 12. Recommend our Tune-book every where: and if you cannot ſing yourſelf, chuſe a perſon or two in each place to pitch the tune for you. 13. Exhort every one in the Congregation to ſing, not one in ten only. 14. If a Preacher be preſent, let no Singer give out the words. 15. When they would teach a tune to the Congregation, they muſt ſing only the Tenor.

After Preaching, take a little Lemonade, mild Ale, or Candid Orange-Peel. All ſpirituous Liquors, at that time eſpecially, are deadly poiſon.

Q. 40. Who is the *Aſſiſtant?*

A. That Preacher in each Circuit, who is appointed from time to time, to take charge of the Societies and the other Preachers therein.

Q. 41. How ſhould an Aſſiſtant be qualified for his charge?

A. By walking cloſely with God, and having his work greatly at heart: by underſtanding and loving Diſcipline, Ours in particular, and by loving the Church of *England*, and reſolving not to ſeparate from it.

Q. 42. What is the buſineſs of an Aſſiſtant?

A. To ſee that the other Preachers in his Circuit behave well, and want nothing: 2. To viſit the Claſſes quarterly, regulate the Bands, and deliver Tickets: 3. To take in, or put out of the Society or the Bands: 4. To keep Watch-nights and Love-feaſts: 5. To hold Quarterly-Meetings, and therein diligently to enquire both into the temporal and ſpiritual State of each Society: 6. To take care that every Society be duly ſupplied with Books: particularly with *Kempis*, *Inſtructions for Children*, and

the *Primitive Phyſic*, which ought to be in every Houſe: 7. To ſend from every Quarterly-Meeting a circumſtantial Account (to *London*) of every remarkable Converſion, and remarkable Death: 8. To take exact Liſts of his Societies every Quarter, and ſend them up to *London*: 9. To meet the Married Men and Women, and the Single Men and Women in the large Societies once a quarter: 10. To overlook the Accounts of all the Stewards.

Q. 43. Has the Office of an Aſſiſtant been well executed?

A. No, not by half the Aſſiſtants. 1. Who has ſent me word, whether the other Preachers behave well or ill? 2. Who has viſited all the Claſſes, and regulated the Bands quarterly? 3. Love-feaſts *for the Bands* have been neglected: Neither have perſons been duly taken in and put out of the Bands: 4. The Societies are not half ſupplied with Books; not even with thoſe above-mentioned. O exert yourſelves in this! Be not weary! Leave no Stone unturned! 5. How few Accounts have I had, either of remarkable Deaths, or remarkable Converſions? 6. How few exact Liſts of the Societies? 7. How few have met the Married and Single Perſons once a quarter?

Q. 44. Are there any other Advices, which you would give the Aſſiſtants?

A. Several. 1. Take a regular Catalogue of your Societies, as they live, *in houſe-row*: 2. Leave your Succeſſor a particular account of the ſtate of the Circuit: 3. See that every Band-leader have the Rules of the Bands: 4. Vigorouſly, but calmly inforce the rules concerning needleſs Ornaments, Drams, Snuff and Tobacco. Give no band-ticket to any man or woman, who does not promiſe to leave them off: 5. As ſoon as there are four men or women believers in any place, put them into a Band: 6. Suffer no Love-feaſt to laſt above an hour and an half: And inſtantly ſtop all breaking the cake with one another: 7. Warn all from time to time, that none are to remove from one Society to another,

another, without a Certificate from the Aſſiſtant in theſe words, (elſe he will not be received in other Societies) "A. B. the Bearer, is a member of our Society in C. I believe he has ſufficient cauſe for removing." 8. Every where recommend Decency and Cleanlineſs. Cleanlineſs is next to Godlineſs. 9. Exhort all that were brought up in the Church, to continue therein. Set the example yourſelf: and immediately change every plan, that would hinder their being at Church, at leaſt Two Sundays in four. Carefully avoid whatever has a tendency to ſeparate men from the Church: in particular, preaching at any hour which hinders them from going to it. And let all the Servants in our Preaching-houſes go to Church once on Sunday at leaſt.

Is there not a cauſe? Are we not unawares by little and little ſliding into a ſeparation from the Church? O uſe every means to prevent this! 1. Exhort all our people to keep cloſe to the Church and Sacrament: 2. Warn them all againſt Niceneſs in hearing, a prevailing evil! 3. Warn them alſo againſt deſpiſing the Prayers of the Church: 4. Againſt calling our Society *the Church*: 5. Againſt calling our Preachers, *Miniſters*, our Houſes *Meeting-houſes*; Call them plain *Preaching-houſes* or Chappels: 6. Do not licence them as *Diſſenters*: The proper paper to be ſent in at the Aſſizes, Seſſions or Biſhop's Court is this: "A. B. deſires to have his houſe in C. licenſed for Public Worſhip." 7. Do not licenſe yourſelf till you are conſtrained; and then not as a *Diſſenter*, but a *Methodiſt*. It is time enough when you are proſecuted, to take the Oaths. And by ſo doing you are licenſed.

Q. 45. But are we not *Diſſenters?*

A. No. Although we call ſinners to repentance *in all places* of God's dominion; and although we frequently uſe *Extemporary Prayer*, and unite together in *a religious Society:* Yet we are not *Diſſenters* in the only ſenſe which our Law acknowledges, namely thoſe who renounce the Service of the

Church. We do not: We dare not ſeparate from it. We are not *Seceders*, nor do we bear any reſemblance to them. We ſet out upon quite oppoſite Principles. The Seceders laid the very foundation of their work, in judging and condemning *others*. We laid the foundation of our work, in judging and condemning *ourſelves*. They begin every where, with ſhewing their Hearers, How fallen the *Church* and *Miniſters* are. We begin every where, with ſhewing our hearers, how fallen they are *themſelves*.

And never let us make light of going to Church, either by word or deed. Remember Mr. *Hook*, a very eminent, and a zealous Papiſt. When I aſked him, "Sir, what do you do for Public Worſhip here, where you have no Romiſh Service?" He anſwered, "Sir, I am ſo fully convinced, it is the duty of every man to worſhip God in public, that I go to Church every Sunday. If I cannot have ſuch worſhip as I would, I will have ſuch worſhip as I can."

But ſome may ſay, "Our own Service is public Worſhip." Yes; but not ſuch as ſuperſedes the Church-Service: It preſuppoſes Public Prayer, like the Sermons at the Univerſity. If it were deſigned to be inſtead of the Church-Service, it would be eſſentially defective. For it ſeldom has the four grand parts of Public Prayer, Deprecation, Petition, Interceſſion, and Thankſgiving.

If the people put ours in the room of the Church-Service, we *hurt* them that ſtay with us, and *ruin* them that leave us. For then they will go no where, but lounge the Sabbath away, without any public worſhip at all.

Q. 46. Nay, but is it not our Duty, to ſeparate from the Church, conſidering the wickedneſs both of the Clergy and the People?

A. We conceive not, 1. Becauſe both the Prieſts and the people were full as wicked in the Jewiſh Church. And yet it was not the duty of the holy Iſraelites to ſeparate from them: 2. Neither did our Lord command his Diſciples to ſeparate from them:

He

He rather commanded the contrary. 3. Hence it is clear, *that* could not be the meaning of St *Paul's* words, *Come out from among them, and be ye ſeparate.*

Q. 47. But what Reaſons are there, why we ſhould not ſeparate from the Church?

A. Among others, thoſe which were printed above twenty years ago, intitled "Reaſons againſt a Separation from the Church of *England.*"

Q. 48. Do we ſufficiently watch over our Helpers?

A. We might conſider thoſe that are with us as our Pupils: Into whoſe behaviour and ſtudies we ſhould enquire every day.

Should we not frequently aſk each, Do you walk cloſely with God? Have you *now* Fellowſhip with the Father, and the Son? At what hour do you riſe? Do you punctually obſerve the Morning and Evening hour of Retirement? Do you ſpend the day in the manner which we adviſe? Do you converſe ſeriouſly, uſefully and cloſely?

To be more particular;

Do you uſe all the Means of Grace yourſelf, and inforce the uſe of them on all other perſons!

They are either *Inſtituted* or *Prudential.*

I. The Inſtituted are,

1. Prayer; Private, Family, Public; conſiſting of Deprecation, Petition, Interceſſion, and Thankſgiving. Do you uſe each of theſe?

Do you uſe Private Prayer every Morning and Evening? If you can, at five in the Evening, and the hour before or after Morning-Preaching?

Do you forecaſt daily, wherever you are, how to ſecure theſe hours? Do you avow it every where? Do you aſk every where, Have *you* Family-Prayer? Do *you* retire at five o'clock?

II. Searching the Scriptures, by,

1. Reading; *conſtantly*, ſome part of every day, *regularly*, all the Bible in order: *carefully*, with the Notes; *ſeriouſly* with Prayer before and after; *fruitfully*, immediately practiſing what you learn there?

2. Meditating:

2. Meditating: At ſet times? By any rule?

3. Hearing: Every Morning?

Carefully? With Prayer before, at, after?

Immediately putting in practice?

Have you a New Teſtament always about you?

III. The Lord's Supper. Do you uſe this at every opportunity?

With ſolemn prayer before? With earneſt and deliberate Self-devotion?

IV. Faſting. *How* do you faſt every Friday?

V. Chriſtian Conference. Are you convinced how important and how difficult it is, to *order your converſation right?*

Is it *always in grace? Seaſoned with ſalt? Meet to miniſter grace to the Hearers?*

Do not you converſe too long at a time? Is not an hour commonly enough?

Would it not be well, always to have a determinate end in view? And to pray before and after it?

II. *Prudential* Means we may uſe, either as common Chriſtians, as Methodiſts, as Preachers, or as Aſſiſtants.

1. As common Chriſtians: What particular *Rules* have *you*, in order to grow in grace? What *Arts* of Holy Living?

2. As Methodiſts, do you never miſs your Claſs or Band?

3. As Preachers, do you meet every Society? Alſo, the Leaders and Bands if any?

4. As Aſſiſtants, have you throughly conſidered your Office? And do you make a conſcience of executing every part of it?

Theſe Means may be uſed without fruit. But there are ſome means, which cannot; namely Watching, Denying ourſelves, taking up our Croſs, Exerciſe of the Preſence of God.

1. Do you ſteadily watch againſt the World? the Devil? Yourſelves? Your beſetting ſin?

2. Do you deny yourſelf every uſeleſs Pleaſure of Senſe? Imagination? Honour? Are you temperate in all things? Inſtance in Food. Do you uſe only that *kind* and that *degree*, which is beſt both

both for your Body and Soul? Do you ſee the neceſſity of this?

3. Do you eat no Fleſh-Suppers? No late Suppers?

4. Do you eat no more at each Meal than is neceſſary? Are you not heavy or drowzy after Dinner?

5. Do you uſe only that kind and that degree of Drink which is beſt both for your body and ſoul?

6. Do you drink Water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off? If not for Health, when will you begin again? To day?

7. How often do you drink Wine or Ale? Every day? Do you *want it?*

8. Wherein do you *take up your croſs daily?* Do you chearfully *bear your croſs* (whatever is grievous to nature) as a Gift of God, and labour to profit thereby?

9. Do you endeavour to ſet God always before you? To ſee his eye continually fixt upon you! Never can you uſe theſe means but a bleſſing will enſue. And the more you uſe them the more will you grow in grace.

Q. 49. What can be done, in order to a cloſer Union of our Helpers with each other?

A. 1. Let them be deeply convinced of the want there is of it at preſent, and the abſolute Neceſſity of it:

2. Let them pray for a Deſire of Union:

3. Let them ſpeak freely to each other:

4. When they meet, let them never part without Prayer:

5. Let them beware, how they deſpiſe each other's Gifts:

6. Let them never ſpeak ſlightingly of each other in any kind:

7. Let them defend one another's Characters in every thing, ſo far as conſiſts with truth; And

8. Let them labour, in honour each to prefer the other before himſelf.

Q. 50.

Q. 50. How ſhall we try thoſe who think they are moved by the Holy Ghoſt to preach?

A. Enquire, 1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the Love of God abiding in them? Do they deſire and ſeek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of Converſation? 2. Have they *Gifts*, (as well as *Grace*) for the work? Have they (in ſome tolerable degree) a clear, ſound Underſtanding? Have they a right Judgment in the things of God? Have they a juſt conception of Salvation by Faith? And has God given them any degree of Utterance? Do they ſpeak juſtly, readily, clearly? 3. Have they *Fruit?* Are any truly convinced of ſin, and converted to God by their Preaching?

As long as theſe three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. Theſe we receive as ſufficient proof, that he is *moved thereto by the Holy Ghoſt.*

Q. 51. What Method may we uſe in receiving a New Helper?

A. A proper time, for doing this, is at a Conference after ſolemn Faſting and Prayer.

Every perſon propoſed is then to be preſent; and each of them may be aſked,

"Have *you* Faith in Chriſt? Are you *going on to perfection?* Do you expect to be *perfected in love in this life?* Are you groaning after it! Are you reſolved to devote yourſelf wholly to God and to his work? Do you know the Methodiſt-Plan? Have you read the *Plain Account?* The *Appeals?* Do you know the *Rules of the Society?* Of the *Bands?* Do you keep them? Do you take no Snuff? Tobacco? Drams? Do you conſtantly attend the Church and Sacrament? Have you read the *Minutes of the Conference?* Are you willing to conform to them? Have you conſidered the Rules of an *Helper?* Eſpecially the firſt, tenth and twelfth? Will you keep them for Conſcience' ſake? Are you determined to employ *all* your time in the work of God? Will you preach every Morning and

and Evening: Endeavouring not to ſpeak too long or too loud? Will you diligently inſtruct the Children in every place? Will you viſit from houſe to houſe? Will you recommend Faſting, both by Precept and Example?

Are you in Debt?

We may than receive him as a Probationer by giving him the Minutes of the Conference inſcribed thus:

To *A. B.*

"You think it your Duty to call Sinners to Repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we ſhall rejoice to receive you as a Fellow-labourer.

Let him then read, and carefully weigh what is contained therein, that if he has any Doubt, it may be removed.

Obſerve! Taking *on trial* is intirely different from *admitting* a Preacher. One on trial may be either admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong. Otherwiſe it would be no trial at all. Let every Aſſiſtant explain this to them that are on trial.

At the next Conference, if recommended by the Aſſiſtant, he may be received into full connexion, by giving him the Minutes inſcribed thus:

"As long as you freely conſent to, and earneſtly endeavour to walk by theſe Rules, we ſhall rejoice to acknowledge you as a Fellow-labourer."

Mean time let none exhort in any of our Societies, without a Note of Permiſſion from the Aſſiſtant: Let every Exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly: And let every Aſſiſtant inſiſt upon it.

Q. 52. What is the Method wherein we uſually proceed in our Conferences?

A. We enquire,

1. What Preachers are *admitted?*
   Who *remain on trial?*
   Who are *admitted on trial?*
   Who *deſiſt* from travelling?

2. Are

2. Are there any Objections to any of the Preachers? Who are named one by one.

3. How are the Preachers ſtationed this year?

4. What numbers are in the Society?

5. What is the *Kingſwood* Collection?

6. What Boys are received this year?

7. What Girls are aſſiſted?

8. What is contributed for the Contingent Expences?

9. How was this expended?

10. What is contributed toward the Fund, for ſuperannuated and ſupernumerary Preachers?

11. What demands are there upon it?

12. How many Preachers' Wives are to be provided for? By what Societies?

13. Where and when may our next Conference begin?

Q. 53. How can we provide for Superannuated and ſupernumerary Preachers?

A. Thoſe who can preach four or five times a week, are ſupernumerary Preachers. As for thoſe who cannot,

1. Let every travelling Preacher contribute half a Guinea yearly at the Conference:

2. Let every one when firſt admitted as a travelling Preacher pay a Guinea:

3. Let this be lodged in the hands of the Stewards:

4. The preſent Stewards are, *John Murlin*, and *John Pawſon*.

5. Out of this let proviſion be made firſt for the worn-out Preachers, and then for the Widows and Children of thoſe that are dead.

6. Every worn-out Preacher ſhall receive, if he wants it, at leaſt ten Pounds a year.

7. Every Widow of a Preacher ſhall receive yearly, (if ſhe wants it) during her Widowhood, a ſum not uſually exceeding ten Pounds.

8. Every Child left by a Preacher ſhall receive once for all, a ſum not uſually exceeding ten Pounds.

9. But none is entitled to any thing from this Fund, till he has ſubſcribed two Guineas.

10. No

10. Nor any who neglects paying his Subscription
r four years together.

11. Let every Preacher who does not bring or
nd his Subscription to the Conference, be fined
o shillings and sixpence.

12. Let the fund never be reduced to less than
hundred pounds.

13. Let a Committee be named to see these Rules
ly executed. The present Committee are,

Christopher Hopper.	Thomas Lee.
Robert Roberts.	Duncan Wright.
Thomas Coke.	Thomas Taylor.
Thomas Hanby.	William Thompson.
John Allen.	Thomas Rankin.

14. Let an exact account of all Receits and Dis-
rsements be produced at the Conference.

Let every Assistant bring to the Conference, the
ntribution of every Preacher in his Circuit.

Q. 54. Are not many of the Preachers' Wives
ll straitened for the Necessaries of Life?

A. Some certainly have been. To prevent this
r the time to come,

1. Let every Circuit either provide each with a
odging, Coals and Candles, or allow her fifteen
ounds a year.

2. Let the Assistant take this money at the quar-
rly Meeting, before any thing else be paid out of it.

Q. 55. How can we account for the decrease of
e work of God in some Circuits, both this year
nd the last?

A. It may be owing either 1. To the want of
eal and Exactness in *the Assistant*, occasioning
Vant of Discipline throughout: Or 2. To want
f Life and Diligence in *the Preachers*: or 3. To
ur People's losing the Life of God, and sinking
nto the Spirit of the World.

It may be owing farther, to the want of more
ield-preaching, and of trying more new Places:
And now in particular, To their senseless *Prejudice*
gainst the King, and *speaking evil of dignities*. To stop

 this

this flame, let none preach with us, who ſpeak evil of our Governors, or propheſy evil to the nation. Let every Aſſiſtant take care of this.

Q. 56. But are all our Aſſiſtants themſelves clear of this?

A. Who can teſtify the contrary? No one.

Q. 57. What can be done, in order to revive the work of God where it is decayed?

A. 1. Let every Preacher read carefully over the Life of *David Brainard*. Let us be *followers of him, as he was of Chriſt*, in abſolute Self-devotion, in total Deadneſs to the World, and in fervent Love to God and man. Let us but ſecure this point, and the World and the Devil muſt fall under our feet.

2. Let both Aſſiſtants and Preachers be conſcientiouſly exact in the whole *Methodiſt* Diſcipline.

3. See that no Circuit be at any time without Preachers. Therefore let no Preacher who does not attend the Conference, leave the Circuit, *at that time*, on any pretence whatever. This is the moſt improper time in the whole year. Let every Aſſiſtant ſee to this, and require each of theſe to remain in the Circuit, till the New Preachers come.

Let not all the Preachers in any Circuit come to the Conference.

Let thoſe who do come, ſet out as late and return as ſoon as poſſible.

4. Wherever you can, appoint Prayer-Meetings, and particularly on Friday.

5. Let a Faſt be obſerved in all our Societies, on the laſt Friday in September, and on the Friday after New Year's-day, after Lady-day, and after Midſummer-day.

6. Be more active in diſperſing the Books, particularly the Sermon on *the Good Steward*, on *Indwelling Sin*, the *Repentance of Believers*, and the *Scripture-Way of Salvation*. Every Aſſiſtant may give away ſmall tracts. And he may beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor.

7. Strongly and explicitly exhort all Believers, to *go on to perfection*. That we may *all ſpeak the ſame thing*, I aſk once for all, Shall we defend this Perfection,

Perfection, or give it up? You all agree to defend it, meaning thereby, (as we did from the beginning) Salvation from all ſin, by the Love of God and Man filling our heart. The *Papiſts* ſay, "This cannot be attained, till we have been refined by the fire of Purgatory." The *Calviniſts* ſay, "Nay, it will be attained as ſoon as the Soul and Body part." The *Old Methodiſts* ſay, "It may be attained *before* we die: a moment after is too late." Is it ſo or no? You are all agreed, we may be ſaved from all ſin *before death*. The ſubſtance then is ſettled. But, as to the Circumſtance, is the Change gradual or inſtantaneous? It is both the one and the other. From the moment we are juſtified, there may be a gradual Sanctification, a growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God. And if ſin ceaſe before Death, there muſt, in the nature of the thing, be an Inſtantaneous Change. There muſt be a laſt moment wherein it does exiſt, and a firſt moment wherein it does not. "But ſhould we in Preaching inſiſt both on one and the other?" Certainly we muſt inſiſt on the *gradual Change*; and that earneſtly and continually. And are there not reaſons why we ſhould inſiſt on the Inſtantaneous alſo? If there be ſuch a bleſſed Change before Death, ſhould we not encourage all Believers to expect it? And the rather, becauſe conſtant experience ſhews, the more earneſtly they expect this, the more ſwiftly and ſteadily does the gradual work of God go on in their ſoul: The more watchful they are againſt all ſin; the more careful to grow in grace, the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God. (Whereas juſt the contrary effects are obſerved, whenever this expectation ceaſes.) They are *ſaved by hope*, by this hope of a total Change, with a gradually-increaſing ſalvation. Deſtroy this hope, and that Salvation ſtands ſtill or rather decreaſes daily. Therefore whoever would advance the gradual Change in Believers, ſhould ſtrongly inſiſt on the Inſtantaneous.

Q. 58. What can be done, to increaſe the work of God in *Scotland*?

A. 1. Preach abroad as much as poſſible:

2. Try every town and village:

3. Viſit every member of the Society at home:

4. Let the Preachers at *Dundee* and *Arbroth*, not ſtay at either place more than a week at a time:

5. Let each of them once a quarter viſit *Perth*, *Dunkeld*, and the intermediate villages.

Q. 59. What can be done in order to the future Union of the Methodiſts?

A. 1. It has long been my deſire, that all thoſe Miniſters of our Church who believe and preach Salvation by Faith, might cordially agree between themſelves, and not hinder but help one another. After occaſionally preſſing this in private Converſation, wherever I had opportunity, I wrote down my thoughts upon the head, and ſent them to each of them in a Letter. Out of almoſt Sixty to whom I wrote, only three vouchſafed me an Anſwer. So I give this up. They are a rope of ſand: And ſuch they will continue.

2. But it is otherwiſe with the *travelling Preachers* in our connexion. You are at preſent One Body. You act in concert with each other, and by united counſels. And now is the time to conſider what can be done, in order to continue this Union. Indeed as long as I live, there will be no great difficulty: I am, under God, a Center of Union to all our *travelling*, as well as *local* Preachers. They all know me and my communication. They all love me for my works' ſake: And therefore, were it only out of regard to *me*, they will continue connected with each other. But by what means may this Connexion be preſerved, when it pleaſes God to remove me from you?

3. I take it for granted, it cannot be preſerved by any means, between thoſe who have not a ſingle eye: Thoſe that aim at any thing but the Glory of God in the ſalvation of men; who deſire or ſeek any earthly thing, whether Honour, Profit or Eaſe, will

will not remain in the connexion: It will not anſwer their deſign. Some of theſe, perhaps a Fourth part of the whole number, will procure Preferment in the Church: Others will turn Independents and get ſeparate Congregations. Lay your accounts with this. And be not ſurprized, if ſome be among them, whom you now leaſt of all ſuſpect.

4. But what method can be taken to preſerve a firm Union between thoſe who chuſe to remain together?

Perhaps you might take ſome ſuch ſteps as theſe.

On notice of my Death, let all the Preachers in *Britain* and *Ireland* repair to *London* within ſix weeks.

Let them ſeek God by ſolemn Faſting and Prayer.

Let them draw up Articles of Agreement, to be ſigned by thoſe who chuſe to act in concert.

Let thoſe *who do not chuſe it, be diſmiſt* in the moſt friendly manner poſſible.

Let them chuſe by votes, a *Committee* of Three, Five or Seven, one of them to be *Moderator:*

Let this Committee propoſe Preachers to be *tried, admitted,* or *excluded;* fix the place of each Preacher for the enſuing year, and the time of the next Conference.

5. Can any thing be done now, in order to lay a foundation for this future Union? Would it not be well, for any that are willing to ſign ſome Articles of Agreement, before God calls me hence? Suppoſe the following:

"We whoſe names are under-written, being thoroughly convinced of the Neceſſity of a cloſe Union between thoſe whom God is pleaſed to uſe as inſtruments in this glorious Work, in order to preſerve this Union between ourſelves, are reſolved, God being our Helper,

I. To *devote ourſelves entirely to God*; denying ourſelves, taking up our croſs daily, ſteadily aiming at one thing, to *ſave our own ſouls, and them that hear us:*

II. To preach the *old Methodiſt-Doctrines,* and no other, containedin the Minutes of the Conferences:

III. To obſerve and inforce the whole *Methodiſt Diſcipline*, laid down in the ſaid Minutes.

Q. 60. How many Circuits are there now?

A. Of *America* we have no late account. There are ſix and forty Circuits in *England*, four in *Scotland*, and fourteen in *Ireland*.

Q. 61. Are our Preaching-houſes ſafe?

A. Not all: for ſome of them are not ſettled on Truſtees. Several of the Truſtees for others are dead.

Q. 62. What then is to be done?

A. 1. Let thoſe who have debts on any of the Houſes give a Bond, to ſettle them as ſoon as they are indemnified.

2. Let the ſurviving Truſtees chuſe others without delay, by indorſing their deed thus:

"We the remaining Truſtees of the Methodiſt Preaching-houſe in ———, do according to the power veſted in us by this deed, chuſe ——— to be Truſtees of the ſaid houſe, in the place of ———

Witneſs our hands ———."

N. B. The Deed muſt have three New Stamps, and muſt be inrolled in Chancery within ſix months.

Q. 63. In what form may an Houſe be ſettled?

A. In the following, which was drawn by three of the moſt eminent Lawyers in *London*. Whoever therefore objects to it, only betrays his own Ignorance.

"This Indenture made ——— ——— between *Benjamin Heap*, of ———, in the County of ———, on the one part, and *Thomas Philips*, Hatter, &c. on the other part, WITNESSETH, That in conſideration of five Shillings, lawful money of *Great Britain*, by the ſaid *T. P.* &c. to the ſaid *B. H.* truly paid, before the ſealing and delivering hereof (the receit whereof the ſaid *B. H.* doth hereby acknowledge) and for divers other conſiderations him thereunto moving; the ſaid *B. H.* hath granted, bargained and ſold, and by theſe Preſents doth bargain and ſell, unto the ſaid *T. P.* &c. their Heirs and Aſſigns for ever, All that lately erected

erected Houſe or Tenement, with the Yard thereunto adjoining, ſituate ——— in ——— aforeſaid, now in the tenure or occupation of ———, together with all the ways, drains and privileges to the ſaid premiſes appertaining, and all the profits thereof, with all the right, title and intereſt in law and equity: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD, the ſaid Houſe, Yard, and other premiſes, to the ſaid *T. P.* &c. their Heirs and Aſſigns for ever. NEVERTHELESS upon ſpecial truſt and confidence, and to the intent that they and the Survivors of them, and the Truſtees for the time being, do and ſhall permit *John Weſley*, of the City Road, *London*, Clerk, and ſuch other perſons as he ſhall from time to time appoint, and at all times, during his natural Life, and no other perſons, to have and enjoy the free uſe and benefit of the ſaid premiſes; that the ſaid *John Weſley*, and ſuch other perſons as he appoints, may therein preach and expound God's holy Word: And after his deceaſe, upon farther truſt and confidence, and to the intent that the ſaid Truſtees and the Survivors of them, and the Truſtees for the time being, do and ſhall permit *Charles Weſley*, late of Chriſt Church, *Oxford*, Clerk, and ſuch other perſons as he ſhall from time to time appoint, during his Life, and no other, to have and enjoy the ſaid premiſes for the purpoſes aforeſaid. And after his deceaſe, upon farther truſt and confidence, and to the intent that the ſaid *T. P.* &c. or the major part of them, or the Survivors of them, and the major part of the Truſtees of the ſaid premiſes for the time being, ſhall from time to time, and at all times for ever, permit ſuch perſons as ſhall be appointed at the yearly Conference of the People called *Methodiſts*, in *London*, *Briſtol* or *Leeds*, and no others, to have and to enjoy the ſaid premiſes, for the purpoſes aforeſaid: Provided always, that the ſaid perſons preach no other Doctrine than is contained in Mr. *Weſley*'s Notes upon the New Teſtament, and four Volumes of Sermons: And upon farther truſt and confidence, that as often as any of theſe Truſtees, or the

Truſtees

Truſtees for the time being, ſhall die, or ceaſe to be a member of the Society commonly called *Methodiſts*, the reſt of the ſaid Truſtees, or of the Truſtees for the time being, as ſoon as conveniently may be, ſhall and may chuſe another Truſtee or Truſtees, in order to keep up the number of —— Truſtees for ever. In witneſs whereof the ſaid *B. H.* hath hereunto ſet his hand and ſeal, the day and year above-written."

In this form the Proprietors of the Houſe are to make it over, to five, ſeven or nine Truſtees.

Q. 64. But is this form a ſafe one? Should we not have the opinion of a Council upon it?

A. I think this would be throwing money away: 1. Becauſe this form was drawn up by three eminent Counſellors: but 2. It is the way of almoſt every Lawyer to blame what another has done. Therefore you cannot at all infer, that they *think* a thing wrong, becauſe they *ſay* ſo. 3. If they did in reality think it wrong, this would not *prove* it was ſo. 4. If there was, (which I do not believe) ſome defect therein, who would go to law with the Body of *Methodiſts?* But 5. If they did, would any Court in *England* put them out of *poſſeſſion?* Eſpecially when the *intent* of the deed was plain and undeniable.

Q. 65. Is any thing farther adviſable with regard to Building?

A. 1. Build all Preaching-houſes, where the ground will permit, in the Octogan form. It is beſt for the voice, and on many accounts more commodious than any other. 2. Why ſhould not any Octogan Houſe be built after the model of *Yarm?* Any Square Houſe, after the model of *Bath* or *Scarborough?* Can we find any better model? 3. Let the Roof riſe only one third of its breadth: this is the true proportion. 4. Have Doors and Windows enough: And let all the Windows be Saſhes, opening downward: 5. Let there be no Chineſe Paling, and no Tub-Pulpit, but a ſquare Projection with a long Seat behind: 6. Let there be no Pews

and

and no Backs to the Seats, which ſhould have Iſles on each ſide, and be parted in the middle by a rail running all along, to divide the Men from the Women: Juſt as at *Bath*. 7. Let all Preaching-houſes be built plain and decent; but not more expenſively than is abſolutely unavoidable: Otherwiſe the neceſſity of raiſing money will make Rich men neceſſary to us. But if ſo, we muſt be dependent upon them, yea and governed by them. And then farewel to the Methodiſt Diſcipline, if not Doctrine too. 8. Wherever a Preaching-houſe is built, ſee that Lodgings for the Preachers be built alſo.

Q. 66. Is there any Exception to the Rule, "Let the Men and Women ſit apart?"

A. In thoſe Galleries where they have always ſat together, they may do ſo ſtill. But let them ſit apart every where below, and in all New-Erected Galleries.

Q. 67. But how can we ſecure their ſitting apart here?

A. I muſt do it myſelf. If I come into any New Houſe, and ſee the men and women together, I will immediately go out. I hereby give public notice of this. Pray let it be obſerved.

Q. 68. But there is a worſe indecency than this creeping in amongſt us, Talking in the Preaching-houſes, before and after Service? How ſhall this be cured?

A. Let all the Preachers join as one man, and the very next Sunday they preach in any place, enlarge on the impropriety of talking before or after Service, and ſtrongly exhort them To do it no more. In three months, if we are in earneſt, this vile practice will be baniſhed out of every Methodiſt-Congregation. Let none ſtop, till he has carried his point.

Q. 69. Complaint has been made that Sluts ſpoil our Houſes. How may we prevent this?

A. Let none that has ſpoiled One, ever live in another. But what a ſhame is this? A Preacher's Wife

Wife ſhould be a pattern of Cleanlineſs, in her Perſon, Cloaths and Habitation. Let nothing flatternly be ſeen about her; No rags; no dirt; no litter. And ſhe ſhould be a pattern of Induſtry: Always at work, either for herſelf, her huſband, or the Poor. I am not willing any ſhould live in the Orphan-houſe at *Newcaſtle*, or any Preaching-houſe, who does not conform to this Rule.

Q. 70. It has been complained alſo, that people crowd into Preaching-houſes, as into Coffee-houſes, without any invitation. Is this right?

A. It is utterly wrong. Stop it at once. Let no perſon come into the Preacher's Houſe, unleſs he wants to aſk a queſtion.

Q. 71. May any New Preaching-houſes be built?

A. Not unleſs, 1. They are propoſed at the Conference: No nor 2. Unleſs two-thirds of the expence be ſubſcribed. And if any Collection be made for them, it muſt be made between the Conference and the beginning of February.

Q. 72. What can be done to make the *Methodiſts* ſenſible of the Excellency of *Kingſwood-School?*

A. Let every Aſſiſtant read the following account of it yearly in every Congregation.

1. The Wiſdom and Love of God have now thruſt out a large number of Labourers into his harveſt: Men who deſire nothing on earth but to promote the Glory of God, by ſaving their own ſouls and thoſe that hear them. And thoſe to whom they miniſter ſpiritual things, are willing to miniſter to them of their carnal things; ſo that they *have food to eat, and raiment to put on*, and are content therewith.

2. A competent proviſion is likewiſe made for the Wives of married Preachers. Theſe alſo lack nothing; having a weekly allowance over and above for their little children: So that neither they nor their Huſbands need be *careful about many things*, but may *wait upon the Lord without diſtraction.*

3. Yet one conſiderable difficulty lies on thoſe that have Boys, when they grow too big to be under

der their Mother's direction. Having no Father to govern and inſtruct them, they are expoſed to a thouſand temptations. To remedy this, we have a School on purpoſe for them, wherein they have all the inſtruction they are capable of, together with all things neceſſary for the Body, Cloaths only excepted. And it may be, if God proſper this labour of love, they will have theſe too ſhortly.

4. In whatever view we look upon this, it is one of the nobleſt Charities that can be conceived. How reaſonable is the Inſtitution? Is it fit that the Children of thoſe who leave Wife, and all that is dear, to ſave ſouls from death, ſhould want what is needful either for ſoul or body? Ought not we to ſupply what the Parent cannot, becauſe of his labours in the Goſpel? How excellent are the effects of this Inſtitution? The Preacher eaſed of this weight, can the more chearfully go on in his labour. And perhaps many of theſe Children may hereafter fill up the place of thoſe that ſhall *reſt from their labours.*

5. It is not ſtrange therefore conſidering the excellence of this deſign, that Satan ſhould have taken much pains to defeat it, particularly by Lies of every kind, which were plentifully invented and handed about for ſeveral years. But Truth now generally prevails, and its Adverſaries are put to ſilence. It is well known, that the Children want nothing; that they ſcarce know what Sickneſs means; that they are well inſtructed in whatever they are capable of learning; that they are carefully and tenderly governed, and that the behaviour of all in the houſe, elder and younger, is *as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt.*

6. But the Expence of ſuch an undertaking is very large, ſo that we are ill able to defray it. The beſt means we could think of at our late Conference to ſupply the deficiency is, once a year to deſire the aſſiſtance of all thoſe in every place, who wiſh well to the work of God; who long to ſee Sinners converted to God, and the Kingdom of Chriſt ſet up in all the Earth.

7. All

7. All of *you*, who are thus minded, have an Opportunity now of ſhewing your Love to the Goſpel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the nobleſt Charities in the World. Now forward, as you are able, one of the moſt excellent Deſigns that ever was ſet on foot in this Kingdom. Do what you can to comfort the Parents, who give up their all for you, and to give their Children cauſe to bleſs you. You will be no poorer for what you do on ſuch an Occaſion. God is a good Pay-maſter. And you know, in doing this, you *lend unto the* Lord: *In due time* HE *ſhall pay you again.*

Q. 73. But how can we keep out of Debt?

A. Let a collection be made for this School the Sunday before or after Midſummer, in every Preaching-houſe, great and ſmall, throughout *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*.

Q. 74. How may we raiſe a General Fund for carrying on the whole Work of God?

A. By a Yearly Subſcription to be propoſed by every Aſſiſtant when he viſits the Claſſes at *Chriſtmas*, and received at the Viſitation following.

To this End he may then read and enlarge upon the following Hints in every Society.

"1. Within theſe thirty Years ſeveral of our Brethren in various Parts, having no Room which would contain the Congregation, by the Advice of the Preachers have built Houſes for Preaching, capable of containing the uſual Number of Hearers: But this has neceſſarily involved them in large debts. This the Societies to whom thoſe Houſes belong, are by no means able to pay: But the whole Body of Methodiſts joining together can do it without Inconvenience. Only let them chearfully exert on ſo preſſing an Occaſion the Ability which God hath given them.

2. But how ſhall we ſend Labourers into thoſe Parts, where they are moſt of all wanted? Suppoſe the North-Weſt of *Ireland*, and the North of *Scotland*? Many are willing to hear; but not to bear the Expence. Nor can it as yet be expected of them:

them: ſtay till the word of God has touched their hearts, and then they will gladly provide for them that preach it. Does it not lie upon *us*, in the mean time, to ſupply their lack of ſervice? To raiſe a General Fund out of which from time to time that Expence may be defrayed? By this means, thoſe who willingly offer themſelves may travel through every part, whether there are Societies or not, and ſtay wherever there is a Call, without being burdenſome to any. Thus may the Goſpel, in the Life and Power thereof, be ſpread from Sea to Sea. Which of you will not rejoice to throw in your Mite, to promote this glorious work?

Beſides theſe, in carrying on ſo large a Work through the three Kingdoms, there are calls for money in various ways, and we muſt frequently be at conſiderable expence, or the work muſt be at a full ſtop. Many too are the occaſional Diſtreſſes of our Preachers or their Families, which require an immediate ſupply. Otherwiſe their hands would hang down, if they were not conſtrained to depart from the work.

3. Let then every member of our Society once a year, ſet his ſhoulder to the work; contributing more or leſs as God hath proſpered him, at the *Lady-Day* Viſitation of the Claſſes. Let none be excluded from giving ſomething, be it a penny, a half-penny, a farthing. Remember the Widow's two mites! And let thoſe who are able to give ſhillings, crowns, and pounds, do it willingly. The money contributed will be brought to *Leeds*, *Briſtol*, or *London*, at the enſuing Conference.

4. Men and Brethren, help! Was there ever a Call like *this*, ſince you firſt heard the Goſpel-Sound? Help to relieve your Companions in the Kingdom of Jeſus, who are preſt above meaſure. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt." Help to ſend forth able, willing Labourers into your Lord's Harveſt: So ſhall ye be aſſiſtant in ſaving Souls from death, and hiding a multitude of Sins. Help to ſpread the Goſpel of

your Salvation into the remoteſt corners of the Kingdom, till "the Knowledge of our Lord ſhall cover the Land, as the Waters cover the Sea." So ſhall it appear to ourſelves, and all men, that we are indeed one Body, united by one Spirit; ſo ſhall the baptized Heathens be yet again conſtrained to ſay, "See how theſe Chriſtians love one another."

In this, may not even the Romaniſts provoke us to jealouſy? They have a General Fund at *Rome*, and another at *Paris*, which bears all the Expences of their Miſſionaries throughout all the world.

Q. 75. What is the direct Antidote to *Methodiſm* (the Doctrine of Heart-Holineſs:)

A. *Calviniſm*: All the Devices of Satan for theſe forty years, have done far leſs toward ſtopping this Work of God, than that ſingle Doctrine. It ſtrikes at the root of Salvation from Sin, previous to glory, putting the matter on quite another iſſue.

Q. 76. But wherein lie the Charms of this Doctrine? What makes men ſwallow it ſo greedily?

A. 1. It ſeems to magnify Chriſt: although in reality it ſuppoſes him to have died in vain. For the abſolutely elect muſt have been ſaved without him: And the non-elect cannot be ſaved by him.

2. It is highly pleaſing to fleſh and blood, Final Perſeverance in particular.

Q. 77. What can be done, to guard againſt it?

A. 1. Let all our Preachers carefully read over Our's and Mr. *Fletcher's* Tracts.

2. Let them frequently and explicitly preach the truth, though not in a controverſial way. But let them take care to do it in Love and Gentleneſs: Not in bitterneſs, not returning railing for railing. Let Mr. *R*—— and *R*—— *H*——, and their Aſſociates, have all this to themſelves.

3. Do not imitate them in ſcreaming, allegorizing, boaſting: Rather mildly expoſe theſe things when time ſerves.

4. Imitate them in this. They readily ſeize upon any one that is newly convinced or converted. Be diligent to prevent them, and to guard thoſe tender minds againſt the Predeſtinarian Poiſon.

5. Anſwer

5. Anſwer all their Objections, as occaſion offers, both in public and private. But take care to do this, with all poſſible Sweetneſs both of Look and of Accent.

6. Very frequently, both in public and private, adviſe our people, Not to hear them.

7. Make it matter of conſtant and earneſt Prayer, That God would ſtop the Plague.

Q. 78. We ſaid in 1744, "We have leaned too much toward Calviniſm." Wherein?

A. 1. With regard to *man's faithfulneſs*. Our Lord himſelf taught us to uſe the expreſſion. Therefore we ought never to be aſhamed of it. We ought ſteadily to aſſert upon his Authority, that if a man is not *faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches.*

2. With regard to *working for life*, which our Lord expreſly commands us to do. *Labour* (ἐργαζεσθε) literally, *work for the meat that endureth to everlaſting life*. And in fact, every Believer, till he comes to glory, works *for*, as well as *from* Life.

3. We have received it as a maxim, That "a man is to do nothing, *in order to Juſtification.*" Nothing can be more falſe. Whoever deſires to find favour with God ſhould *ceaſe from evil and learn to do well.* So God himſelf teaches by the Prophet *Iſaiah*. Whoever repents ſhould *do works meet for repentance.* And if this is not *in order* to find favour, what does he do them for?

Once more review the whole Affair:

1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God?

He that now believes in Chriſt, with a loving obedient heart.

2. But who among thoſe that never heard of Chriſt?

He that according to the light he has, *feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs.*

3. Is this the ſame with He that is *ſincere?*

Nearly, if not quite.

4. Is not this *Salvation by works*?

Not by the *merit* of Works, but by works as a *Condition.*

5. What

5. What have we then been diſputing about fo
theſe thirty years?

I am afraid, *about words:* (Namely, in ſome o
the foregoing inſtances.)

6. As to *Merit* itſelf, of which we have been ſ
dreadfully afraid: We are rewarded *according t
our works*, yea, *becauſe of our works*. How does thi
differ from *for the ſake of our works?* And ho
differs this from *Secundum merita operum?*) Whic
is no more than, *as our works deſerve?* Can you ſpl
this hair? I doubt, I cannot.

7. The grand objection to one of the precedin
Propoſitions, is drawn from matter of fact. Go
does in fact juſtify thoſe, who by their own con
feſſion neither *feared God*, nor *wrought righteouſnes*
Is this an Exception to the general Rule?

It is a doubt, whether God makes any exceptio
at all. But how are we ſure that the perſon i
queſtion never did fear God and work righteou
neſs? His own thinking ſo is not proof. For w
know, how all that are convinced of ſin, unde
value themſelves in every reſpect.

8. Does not talking, without proper caution, o
a *juſtified* or *ſanctified ſtate*, tend to miſlead men
Almoſt naturally leading them to truſt in what wa
done in *one moment?* Whereas we are every mo
ment *pleaſing* or *diſpleaſing* God, *according to ou
works?* According to the whole of our preſen
inward tempers and outward behaviour.

F I N I S.